

REMARKS

This amendment responds to the Final Office Action mailed on September 12, 2006. Claims 17-26 are currently pending, of which claim 17 has been amended. The amendment is in response to a telephone interview with the Examiner on October 25, 2006 in which the Examiner agreed that the above amendments to claim 17 would define claim 17 over U.S. Patent No. 6,540,104 to Yanagita et al. (hereinafter the “Yanagita reference”). Applicants’ undersigned representative appreciates the courtesy extended by the Examiner in granting and conducting the telephone interview. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims have been placed in complete condition for allowance and request reconsideration of the application in this regard.

A. Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

Claims 17-23, 25 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by the Yaganita reference. As discussed during the interview of October 25, 2006, the Yaganita reference fails to disclose or suggest “a flow passage constructed and arranged to enable the liquid to communicate between said two or more vessels.” The Yaganita reference discloses that there is a junction that joins the two different sections of the flow line 56 prior to the junction of the flow line 56 with the dispensing outlet 26 that causes the flows inside the two different sections of the flow line 56 to join and flow out of the dispensing outlet 26. The Yaganita reference fails to disclose or suggest anywhere, however, that the liquid flowing through the flow line 56 communicates between the cylinders 34A and 34B. In fact, the Yaganita reference discloses the exact opposite by teaching that either closed outlet valves 62A and 62B or opposing flows would prevent any fluid communication between the cylinders 34A and 34B. Thus, Applicants request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of independent claim 17, and claims 18-23, 25 and 26 depending therefrom, for at least this reason.

B. Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claim 24 stands rejected as being unpatentable over the combination of the Yaganita reference with U.S. Patent No. 4,911,956 to Gabryszewski (hereinafter the “Gabryszewski reference”). The Gabryszewski reference fails to remedy the deficiencies of the Yaganita reference. Specifically, the Gabryszewski reference at least fails to disclose or suggest “a flow passage constructed and arranged to enable the liquid to communicate between said two or more vessels.” Dependent claim 24 is patentable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 17. Furthermore, dependent claim 24 recites a unique combination of elements not disclosed or suggested by the combination of the Fujii, Yaganita, and Gabryszewski references.

Conclusion

Applicants have made a bona fide effort to respond to each and every requirement set forth in the Office Action. In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, this application is submitted to be in complete condition for allowance and, accordingly, a notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. In the event that any issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to expedite issuance of this application.

Applicants do not believe that any fees are due in connection with this response. However, if any additional fees are necessary as a result of this communication, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any necessary fees to Deposit Account 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,
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